in the stratification or the character of the beds of oolite at Box that can or does cause any danger; on the contrary, there is a very fine, hard, and sound bed, which has been selected and made to form the roof by working up to it, and from which nothing ever fell, and there are extensive quarries close by exhibiting the durability and soundness of this stone with roofs of much greater extent than in the tunnel.

"I. K. BRUNEL."

General Pasley has also reported, and declares that the tunnel is perfectly sound and safe.

COLLEGE OF CHEMISTRY.

AN attempt is being made to establish a college of chemistry in the metropolis. It is a national disgrace that we have not had for many years an institution of this kind in active operation, and it is to the want of such a college that we must attribute the little progress which this science has made in this country, when compared with the improvements which have been effected in the various continental states, particularly Germany, where schools of practical chemistry have for a long period been established.

The promoters of this college have four objects in view—viz.: 1st. To establish a laboratory (as designed by Sir H. Davy) for original investigations, and for extending the boundaries of chemical science on the model of the Giessen laboratory. 2nd. To form a "college" for the instruction of students in analysis and scientific research, upon such terms as to encourage young men of talent and scientific taste to apply themselves to chemistry, and for qualifying public lecturers and teachers. 3rd. To form departments for the application of chemistry to agriculture, geology, mineralogy, and metallurgy, by an analysis of soils, rocks, &c.; to medicine, physiology, the arts and manufactures. 4th. The employment of such means as may appear expedient for encouraging the pursuit of scientific chemistry throughout the country, and for making it a branch of general education.

The project is patronised by some of the most eminent public and scientific men of the day, among whom we find (on the council) the names of the Dukes of Wellington and Sutherland, the Marquis of Lansdowne, Earls of Dalhousie and Fitzwilliam, Sir J. Clark, Bart., Dr. Holland, Dr. Gregory, and the Rev. Dr. Buckland.

It is trusted that so noble an undertaking will not be allowed to fall to the ground for want of public patronage.

A case illustrating the importance of a school of practical chemistry, with reference to metallurgy, has been mentioned recently. A student of the Giessen school having visited and inspected the iron-works of Count Salm, in Austria, was enabled to suggest improvements in the processes employed, the cost of which did not exceed 600*l.* sterling. For this, and for superintending the processes, the chemist agreed to receive a third part of the profits accruing. At the end of five years he had realized a fortune of 30,000*l.*

SCENIC EFFECTS.—For the approaching bazaar to be held in Covent Garden Theatre, in aid of the Anti-corn Law Fund. It has been determined by the stroke of Grieve's magic wand, and the aid of the "willing-imps" in the service of Mr. Edwards, builder, of Manchester, to transform the whole interior of the theatre, audience part and stage, into a Norman-Gothic hall, which is to have a roof corresponding in character with the style of the rest of the building; this will be of stained glass, from a design of Mr. Grieve, and brilliantly lighted from above so as to shed a "myriad-coloured lustre" of great brilliancy on the upper part of the large area. The pit will be floored over, so as to make it and the stage one vast hall; and there will be a range of Gothic windows of stained glass round the stage part of the hall.

LINCOLN'S-INN NEW SQUARE.—The projected improvements in the new square have been somewhat suddenly suspended by order of the Benchers, in consequence of a protest against them having been numerously signed by the owners and occupiers of chambers in the square.

New Books.

Bloomfield's Poems. Illustrated Edition. Van Voorst. London, 1845.

THE public are indebted to Mr. Van Voorst for beautifully illustrated editions of several of our best authors, amongst which the "Vicar of Wakefield," with Mulready's drawings, stands quite alone. The work now before us contains thirteen illustrations by Sidney Cooper, Thomas Webster, A.R.A., J. Calcott Horsley, and Fred. Tayler, admirably engraved on wood by Thurston Thompson. It cannot fail to be acceptable to the admirers of "The Farmer's Boy," and will make better known writings which are full of right feeling and exquisite sensibility. The drawing at the head of "Richard and Kate," by Webster, is our favourite;" we should advise the artist to make a picture of it.

A Series of Letters on Agricultural Improvement. By J. J. MECHI. Longman, 1845.

THESE letters unfortunately look a little too much like advertisements; but as we concur with the author "in thinking that the United Kingdom should be as a well-cultivated garden—that our national agriculture has not progressed in the same ratio as our other productions—that this non-progression is a serious national evil, and source of weakness—and that it arises from a want of knowledge and inclination rather than from want of means," and, moreover, are of opinion, that the letters contain much which may be studied usefully by all who are engaged in agriculture, we cannot avoid recommending them to the consideration of our readers. Efficient drainage, good farm buildings, and careful preservation of all manure produced on the farm, are amongst the prominent points urged.

Correspondence.

BATHS AND WASH-HOUSES.

SIR,—I beg leave to trouble you with a few remarks concerning the designs for Public Baths and Wash-houses. I had inspection of the designs at Mr. Rainy's rooms on Tuesday; after spending some time there, I was struck with the idea that the plans generally were upon one principle, and I cannot conceive that any one of those designs was such as should be acted upon; some of them, so far as the drawings and designs for elevations were concerned, certainly deserved credit, but some of the gentlemen strayed away from the voluntary contribution bath and wash-house edifice to that of the private gentleman's country seat.

Now, my idea as to that which is wanting for such a public building and purpose is:—1st. A cold plunging bath for male adults, and another for male youth; another for female adults, and another for girls, all of which should be of good extensive dimensions. This is one most essential requisite for the poor, in proof of which I will refer you to the bathing in the Thames, Lea River, and ponds wherever they can get to swim and wash in; none of these plans possess these plunging baths except two or three of them, and those only on a very small scale.

My second observation will be in regard to the washing department; most of the designs have these offices upon the ground-floor plan, which, according to my opinion, is out of all character so far as concerns the principle of steam, because in having the washing rooms on the ground-floor, the wash steam will rise, and obtain access to the upper floors.

I consider the plunging, warm, vapour, and shower baths should be on the ground-floor, and the washing rooms on the upper floor, because when the women are in the building, they would have every requisite before them for washing; that the trouble of going up one pair of stairs would not be much to them, but to warm bathers it would be so, as many of them are invalid, and some scarcely able to crawl—for instance, a poor creature with violent rheumatism.

Waste steam from the washing being carried on up stairs would do no harm; the building might have a ventilated roof for the escape of steam, and thus be kept in a healthy state, at least as far as vapour is concerned. The ironing and drying rooms could be in connection. If these observations be worthy of your consideration, you are at liberty to use them in any way you please.

Before concluding, I will remark respecting the committee for deciding upon a design for such an important matter; it should consist, I think, of the following, and to be men of experience:—architects, medical men, merchants, tradesmen, and poor-mechanics; from such a committee as this a good result might be expected. In the first place, the architects would be enabled to decide upon the mechanical arrangement of the design; the medical men would be enabled to state upon the requisite wants and construction of shower, vapour, and warm baths; the merchants and tradesmen upon the general wants, and the mechanics upon the actual necessities of the poor.—I am, Sir, &c.,

Hoxton, April 3rd. ARCHI.

ACCIDENT AT OLDHAM.—IRON GIRDERS.

SIR,—In your journal of the 21st of last December, you announced that the Government had appointed a commission, consisting of Sir Henry De la Beche and Thomas Cubitt, Esq., to inquire into the causes of the falling of the cotton-mill at Oldham, and as to the failure of part of the prison at Northleach; and on the 1st of last February, you stated that certain experiments had been made at Thames Bank on the strength of iron girders, for the express purpose of assisting those gentlemen in their inquiries. These announcements have naturally induced me, and to my knowledge many others, to look almost impatiently for a detailed account of these experiments, as well as for a full statement of the causes which led to the accidents referred to in the commission. I therefore beg to inquire whether a report has yet been made, and if it has, whether you intend to give the substance of it in your valuable journal?—I am, Sir, &c.,

SIDEROS.

** We understand that the commissioners made their report some time ago: we shall not fail to give our readers the substance of it. As to the experiments on cast-iron girders, we were prepared to place the results before the public, but learning afterwards that they were to be made part of the report to her Majesty's Government, considered it expedient to defer doing so until after the report had been considered.—ED.

THE DISTRICT SURVEYORS.

SIR,—With others of the building community, I have anxiously been looking in your useful weekly columns, under the hope of finding, either from yourself or your correspondents, some article tending to relieve the building interest from the despotism desired to be exercised over it by the district surveyors. They make every frivolous circumstance a matter of reference to the official referees to whose dictum we are still exposed, notwithstanding the excellent and unanswerable arguments which have appeared in your columns.

To myself it would seem that the secret desire of these gentlemen is to perplex all building operations carried on under the guidance of private surveyors, so as to make it compulsory on builders to employ the surveyor of the district in which he is about to build, in order to protect his operations from molestation or hindrance; to resist which dishonourable attempt, it is a matter of surprise that the trade has not united.

Union is strength—every wrong has its remedy, and this would be found a certain one. I am aware some will say this position is improbable, because the Act specifies that if a district surveyor be employed by the builder, he, the district surveyor, shall not be the official surveyor over such building, but this is easily managed, in more ways than one; and looking at their procedure, I maintain that their litigious and unnecessary conduct fairly induces this conclusion. But whether right or wrong in this general censure (upon a body who should be far above such measures) it would be desirable, under the circumstances, to call a public meeting of the trade, request yourself, or some other gentleman who has studied the subject, to preside as chairman, and making common cause, select some cases best calculated to elicit a legal and honest construction of such points as press most heavily upon the trade by an appeal to the highest authorities.

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